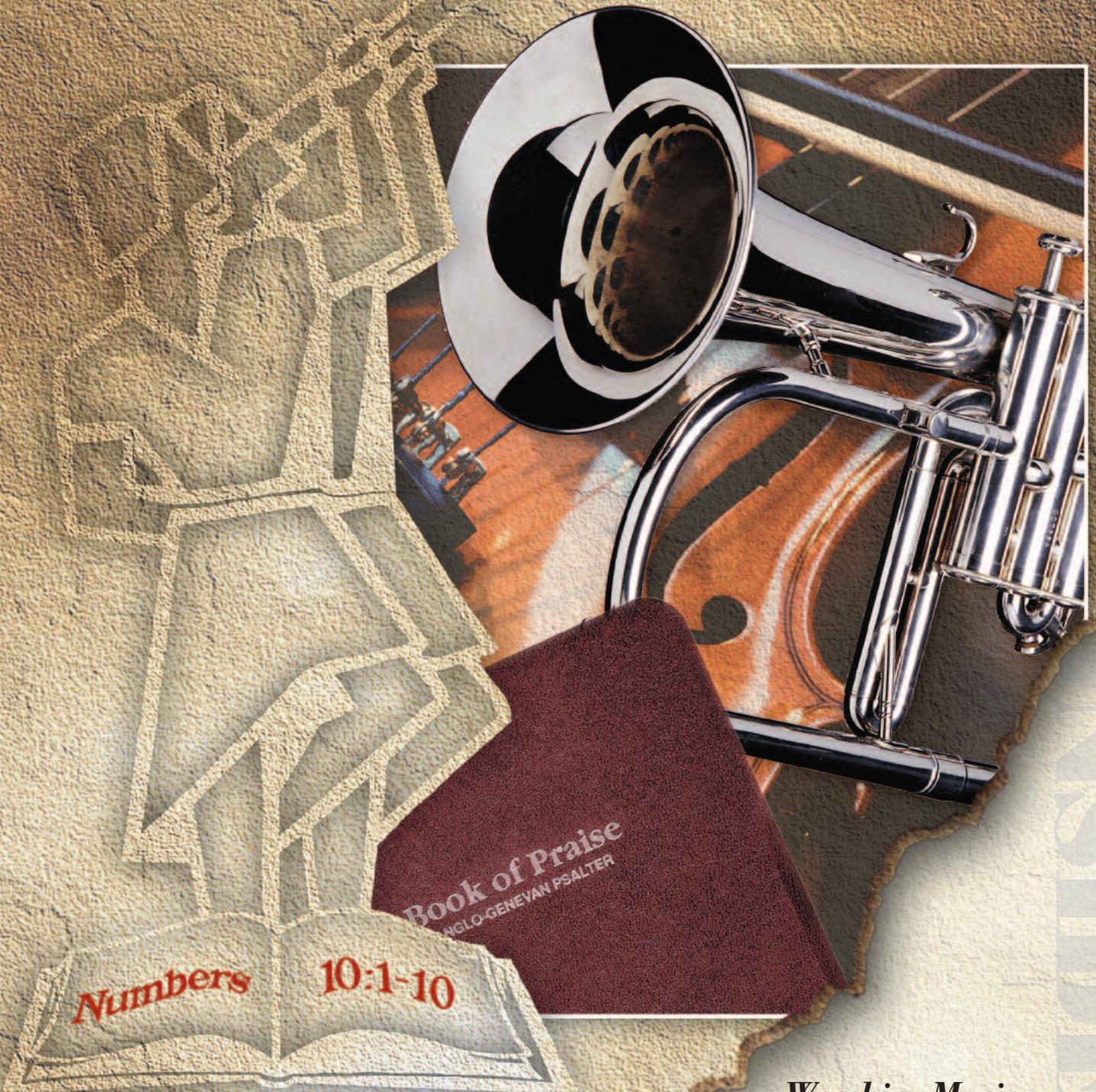
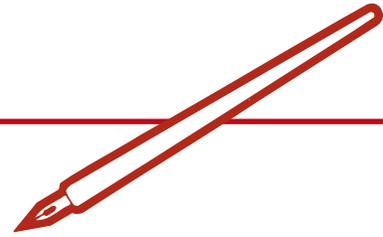


Clarion

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*Worship, Music,
and Praise*



By J. Visscher



Feuding Over a Feast

Sacramental controversy

Of all of the blessings the Lord our God has given to his church on earth, the blessing of the Lord's Supper has to be one of the greatest. In this special meal we, as the people of God, are reminded regularly, visibly and symbolically of the one great sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ for us. Through it God nourishes and sustains us spiritually as we travel through this earthly life. Above all, this is a gift to cherish and to rejoice in.

Unfortunately, however, this is not always what is happening today in all of our churches. In some of them the Lord's Supper, instead of being a meal of union and communion, has become a meal of discord and contention. Members are sending long and angry letters to consistories. Heated words are being spoken and serious accusations are being made. Lord's Supper celebrations are even being boycotted.

The Lord's Supper, instead of being a meal of union and communion, has become a meal of discord and contention.

What is causing all of this upheaval? Are some consistories teaching that the meaning and the message of the Supper has changed? Is the Roman Catholic dogma of "transubstantiation" or the Lutheran interpretation of "consubstantiation" being re-introduced? In other words, does this feuding have to do with biblical and doctrinal interpretation?

Not really! It appears that what is fueling this latest round of sacramental controversy is not so much doctrine as practice, or administration, if you will. Of course, those involved will say that these are doctrinal issues, but properly speaking it is much more about the "how" of celebration than about the "what."

The issues of controversy

What are the issues? Perhaps they can best be identified as (a) the issue of the communal cup versus individual cups; (b) the issue of wine versus juice; (c) the issue of partaking while sitting at a table or doing so in the pew. In this connection it also needs to be mentioned that not all three issues are at the root of every disturbance being experienced. In some cases the disagreements centre around only one or two of the above. Still, it does seem that the heat emitted whether

it is one, two or all three makes very little difference. It is all rather fierce.

Examining the issues – the one cup or the many

Be that as it may, the important thing for us is to take a closer look at these issues. Are they deserving of all of this controversy?

Beginning with the first issue concerning one communal cup or many cups, it is fitting to point out that to some extent putting the issue like this is highly debatable. I say this for the simple reason that, as far as I am aware, not one Canadian Reformed Church has ever used only one cup in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. I have heard of two being used in very small congregations, but more often I have heard, or administered the sacrament myself, using either four or six cups.

In a sense then this issue suffers defeat before it even gets off the ground. Where have those members who insist today on a single communal cup been for the last fifty years? Why did they never protest in the past against the use of more than one cup?

I realize that what is fanning the flames of controversy today is the fact that churches are discussing the use of individual cups. The concern is more about the proliferation of cups from four to forty or six to sixty. Essentially, however, the matter remains the same. If one cup is the biblical norm then we have been doing it wrong as Canadian Reformed Churches for many, many years.

Does this mean that still today only one cup is the requirement?

But have we been in error? Does Holy Scripture command the use of one cup? Does the Lord Jesus insist upon it? A careful reading of the various accounts concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper leans toward the conclusion that the Lord Jesus passed one cup around to his disciples. Some scholars are of the opinion that this cup was most likely the third cup of the Passover or "the cup of blessing," as it was called by the Jews. Let it also be said that there are scholars who believe that one can not be absolutely certain about this, and that the Lord Jesus may well have used multiple cups.

In spite of this view, let us go for a moment with the majority opinion that our Saviour used only one cup. Does this mean that still today only one cup is the requirement? Here

we enter into a different area, and it is the distinction between description and prescription. In other words, in the Bible many things are described. Take the holy kiss as an example. Does the fact that the Bible mentions it mean that we have to practice it? Not at all. We may but we do not have to. On the other hand, if the Lord or the apostle Paul had commanded that we do so, we would be in the area of prescription and we would have to comply.

Hence, does the Lord Jesus command that only one cup be used? Does He make this a matter of divine prescription? No! Celebrating the Lord's Supper until He comes again is a prescription or a command. Using one cup or many is not. It is a matter of biblical freedom.

Another issue – wine or juice

Another issue closely connected to this has to do with whether wine has to be used or whether it is also possible to use something like grape juice, non-alcoholic wine, or something else that is deemed fitting. Is wine, then, the exclusive drink of the Lord's Supper?

Of interest in this connection is that not one of the gospel writers ever use the word "wine" (Greek: *oinos*) when describing the drink that was consumed at the Supper. The word or expression that is used by them is "the fruit of the vine" or "vine fruit" (Greek: *ampelos*).

What's inside?

During the early history of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper was much the same among our churches. However, during the last decade, or so, because of concerns about hygiene, lengthy worship services and lack of a sermon, a number of churches have changed the manner in which they celebrate the Lord's Supper. Some have instituted individual cups at the table itself, or they have individual cups in the pew. Such changes have not always been made without controversy. The editorial of Dr. J. Visscher makes some practical comments about the reaction to these changes.

In our society, many church circles are moving away from traditional styles of worship. One of the things that has fallen into disuse is the pipe organ. However, an article taken from the Internet suggests that there may be a reversal to this trend. Pipe organs are coming back into style. That is encouraging for those who have always loved the pipe organ and have maintained its appropriate use in the worship service. In this issue, Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer also has an article dealing with learning to sing the whole *Book of Praise*.

In this issue we also have our columns *Treasures, New and Old, Education Matters*, along with two press releases, and a description of the new Foreign Student Bursary Fund of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The latter shows some wonderful possibilities for foreign students to study at our theological college.

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In addition, when you read these various gospel accounts, what is striking is that the Lord Jesus does not place the emphasis either on “the fruit of the vine” or on “the cup.” Rather He puts it on the fact that the cup represents “my blood of the covenant” or “the new covenant in my blood” (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). In other words, He directs our attention especially to what the contents of the cup stand for and that this needs to be seen in connection with the new covenant.

The point is that when it comes to the manner of our celebration there are those who treat the biblical data in a very selective way.

In any case, getting back to the wine debate, here too the distinction between description and prescription plays an important role. Did the Lord Jesus command that “the fruit of the vine” be used? No! Does the Bible describe the use of wine for the Supper? Not even that! Besides, we need to realize that if it was wine, it was most likely diluted wine because it was a Jewish custom to add water to the wine for the sake of the children present at the Passover celebration.

A third issue – sitting at the table or in the pew

Although perhaps not as widespread an issue, it is a fact that some of our churches celebrate the sacrament in this fashion and that others are considering it. Especially in large churches where “many tables” are used, it surfaces from time to time as a point of discussion.

Again when it does so there are often those who react strongly against the idea of members receiving the elements of the Lord’s Supper in the pew. They see this too as a violation of biblical givens.

Is that the case though? Does the Bible insist that the communicant members of the congregation have to sit around a table and so partake? No, it does not. It does not even mention sitting at tables. It speaks about the Lord Jesus and his disciples “reclining at the table” (Matt 26:20).

What this means is that those who refuse to acknowledge the distinction between prescription and description, and who see everything as prescriptive, need to insist that the Lord’s Supper be celebrated in a reclining position. And that is not all. For consistency’s sake they might also want to insist that there be no more than thirteen people reclining at one time (see Luke 26: 20).

Now, is there anyone making such a demand today in our churches? Not that I am aware of. The point is that when it comes to the manner of our celebration there are those who treat the biblical data in a very selective way. They demand that one communal cup be used and that wine only be used, but they say not a word about reclining only at the table. Consistency would demand that they do so.

Where does this leave us?

No doubt some of you reading this will be wondering about where I am going with all of this. Am I saying that the Lord’s Supper can be celebrated any way that we please? Not at all! Rather I am trying to show you that the views that some members promote with such great vigour when it comes to this sacrament are going too far.

At the same time they reflect a serious lack of church historical understanding. Throughout her history the church has celebrated this Supper in many different ways. In the time of the Reformation alone it was possible to partake kneeling, standing, and walking. Sitting at table only became acceptable later on, and then not in every country either.

The use of wine, while common, has not been universal either. What is a church to do in an Islamic country where wine is forbidden? What is a missionary to do in a tribal culture that either does not know wine or has no access to it?

And as for the matter of the cup or the cups, is the symbolism not to be found in what is in them rather than in the type of container being used? Besides, what does our Form for the Lord’s Supper tell us? “We must not cling with our hearts to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift our hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate is, at the right hand of our heavenly Father.”

Looking back to history on this matter, and the history of the Reformed Churches in particular, one scholar has written, “the manner of celebration has never been a cause for discord within the Reformed churches, at least, according to the pronouncements of synods” (*Bij Brood en Beker*, p. 414). What a sad and lamentable thing that in some of our churches a fine track record is now being broken.

A better way

Surely, there is a better way. It is the way of Ephesians 4:3, where the apostle Paul writes, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” What this means is that members need to exercise caution when it comes to these matters. Study them – fine! Discuss them – of course! Debate them – if you wish! But to descend to the level of accusation and name calling – that must never happen in the church of Jesus Christ. You are not allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit over matters of description.

You are not allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit over matters of description.

At the same time, it is also necessary for consistories to deal with these matters wisely. Changes in the church should never be made with haste, or with a lack of study, or with insufficient time for congregational reflection and discussion. Objections also must be received with charity and answered respectfully.

Yet if, after all of this, a consistory is still convinced that changes are needed in how the congregation celebrates the Lord’s Supper, then let that be accepted in good faith. We all need to take a step back before we shatter the bond of peace over a meal that is the highest symbol of peace. Should you find it impossible to accept what is happening, then follow the church orderly way and make your objections known to the broader assemblies. All the while stay on the high road of patience and love. Do not react in a way that will deprive you of the peace and blessing of the Lord. 

Rev. J. Visscher is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley, British Columbia.

By C. Van Spronsen

Of Tents, Musical Instruments and Tools

“Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron.”

Genesis 4:20-22

The above text takes us to the dawn of civilization. Two strands of people are developing, the one from the line of Cain and the other from the line of Seth and by the time we reach the seventh generation both lines show their own spirit. Cain left God’s presence and it shows in the following generations while Seth sought the presence of the Lord and in his descendants people began to call upon the Name of the Lord. There are remarkable similarities when we compare the genealogies of Cain and Seth and we find very similar names but a totally different direction and focus in their lives!

Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain are three sons of Lamech born to him from the two wives he had taken. Lamech shows the nature of his father Cain. He not only left the presence of the Lord but openly shows his violent, ungodly nature, bragging about himself in front of his wives that he was even more revengeful and fearful than God.

One of the aspects, however, which deserves our special attention is the fact that Moses tells us about the special accomplishments of these sons of the ungodly Lamech. They are inventors, using their talents and resources, and they thereby provide the human race with ideas and products facilitating people to fulfill their God-given cultural mandate. Jabal was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. Jubal the father of all who play the harp and flute and Tubal-Cain forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. All wonderful inventions and great strides ahead in developing and cultivating the earth, using the resources God

placed on this earth and the potentials created in humans.

What is remarkable, however, is that we find this information about these early developments under the descendants of Cain who showed their ungodliness and unwillingness to serve the Lord in increasing measure. We look in vain for such discoveries and inventions listed under the descendants of Seth. In his family, however, we read of developments of a totally different nature. Mother Eve thanks the Lord for the gift of Seth and in the days of his son “men began to call on the name of the LORD” (4:26). We read of an Enoch who walked with God and then he was no more, because God took him away. There is another Lamech but he in faith calls his son Noah because “he will comfort us in the labour and painful toil of our hands cause by the ground the LORD has cursed” (5:29).

We do not read about them inventing and discovering tents, musical instruments, tools of bronze and iron but we do notice throughout the history of God’s people that they gratefully made use of these discoveries in the service and to the glory of the Lord! What Cain’s descendants failed to do, the descendants of Seth did do, making full use of the products of the world.

God’s ways of fulfilling his plans and providing his people with the means and tools they need to serve Him are amazing. Knowingly or not, even the children of the world must contribute to God’s honour and glory and the children of God may gratefully make use of the results of the efforts

and accomplishments of the children in the world.

No, that does not mean that inventions and discoveries are only made by unbelievers but neither does it mean that whatever has its origin in the world is therefore unholy and unfit for the Lord’s service.

The Lord allows great cultural advances to be made, also by means of the efforts of those who do not serve Him by them. That is the privilege of the children of God. When they leave Egypt they are loaded down with gifts from the Egyptians. When they enter Canaan they benefit from all the agricultural work done by the Canaanites. When they leave Babylon they are again richly provided by the world with means to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

None of these gifts, musical instruments and tools were unholy in themselves. But the question is for what purpose are they being used: Is it to glorify and praise God with them or is it for one’s own pleasure, satisfaction and protection? In the meantime much more has been discovered and great technological advances have been made, often not by children of God and often not to serve God with them. Yet we may receive them in thankfulness and employ them in the service of the Lord to the honour and glory of His holy name. “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Ps 24:1).



Rev. C. Van Spronsen is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, British Columbia.

Learning to Sing the Whole *Book of Praise*

By P.H. Holtvlüwer

The problem

Recently *Clarion* printed an article written by organist brother John Smith on singing the difficult tunes in the *Book of Praise*. Br. Smith makes the valuable point that, “If we want to know the whole will of God, then we have to pay attention to the whole Bible. It was God who decided to give us 150 psalms, not 120 or 130. So if we are commanded to sing psalms, we should sing them all.”¹ I could not agree more. In fact, I would like to expand on this thought, only now, not as one who plays the songs but as one who one who chooses them for the liturgy.

There is indeed evidence showing that we have difficulty regularly selecting not only all the psalms but also all the hymns in the *Book of Praise*. Several years ago a survey published in *Reformed Music Journal (RMJ)* showed a disturbing trend in the songs chosen for the worship services. After receiving feedback from twenty-three Canadian/American Reformed churches covering a period of three months, the author concluded: “About one half of the psalms are sung frequently, and the remaining seventy-three are sung rarely or not at all. About two-thirds of the hymns are sung frequently, while the remaining thirty-three percent are sung rarely. In total, forty-five percent of the psalms and hymns from the *Book of Praise* are sung infrequently.”² Clearly the norm expressed by br. Smith needs more attention in the Canadian/American Reformed Churches.

A vicious circle

When I began my ministry several years ago, as yet unaware of the above survey, I undertook a simple statistical analysis of my own, keeping track of the

songs I chose for the liturgy. I also carefully recorded which tunes were difficult for the congregation to sing – you know, the songs where you find your voice going up while the notes are going down and *vice versa*. Although some hymns were sung incorrectly according to the music provided (e.g., Hy 1A, 25, 47), no hymns were difficult to sing *per se*. The psalms however, were another story. Here I noted twenty-five that were challenging as follows: Psalms 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 20, 28, 39, 41, 44, 52, 55, 58, 59, 83, 88, 94, 109, 114, 117, 120, 126, 129, 137, 148. This data shows a remarkable correlation with that gathered by the more comprehensive survey in *RMJ*. Without exception all of the challenging tunes which I noted fell into the top three categories of songs least selected in the worship services.³ It seems fair to conclude that at least one reason these psalms are not sung frequently is that the congregation has difficulty singing them.

And so we enter the proverbial vicious circle. A difficult tune is not pleas-

ant to sing and creates frustration for both congregation and minister. If a tune is hard to sing, the minister tends to choose it less in the liturgy, not wishing to make the congregation “suffer” through it very often. Since he selects it less often, it becomes only more obscure with time and even harder to sing when it is chosen. This in turn results in more frustration and an even more infrequent selection of these challenging tunes. Soon they become relics and fossils rather than active, useful tools for singing to God in worship.

The good news

There is, however, some good news here. If my informal and limited survey holds true for most congregations, that means that only twenty-five psalm tunes are difficult to sing.⁴ A general impression people often have is that there are *many* Genevan tunes that are tough. This impression creates negative feelings toward their usefulness in the worship services and in turn leads to the call to replace or update them.⁵ But such a conclusion is too hasty and does injustice to the Genevan Psalter as a whole. *RMJ* concluded that some seventy-three psalms are only infrequently selected for the liturgy. However, of these seventy-three *only* twenty-five provide difficulty for the congregation to sing. To put it positively, of the 150 psalms, *125 are well-known and easy to sing*, while only twenty-five provide a challenge (i.e. only seventeen percent of the Psalter). The good news here is that the Genevan tunes are much more familiar and “singable” than they are unfamiliar and difficult.

A further break-down of the twenty-five challenging tunes as I have noted them shows another silver lining. A

Figure 1:
Challenging Psalm Tunes

| Light | Medium | Hard |
|-------|--------|------|
| 5 | 10 | 11 |
| 7 | 13 | 83 |
| 20 | 39 | 88 |
| 28 | 41 | 94 |
| 44 | 52 | 114 |
| 109 | 55 | 120 |
| 117 | 58 | |
| 126 | 59 | |
| 148 | 129 | |
| | 137 | |

good number of even these tunes are more “singable” than many might think. After having adopted a way to become more familiar with these songs as a congregation (see below), within the span of one year I came to categorize these tunes in three categories, referring to the level of challenge in learning them: *Light, Medium, Hard* (See Figure 1).

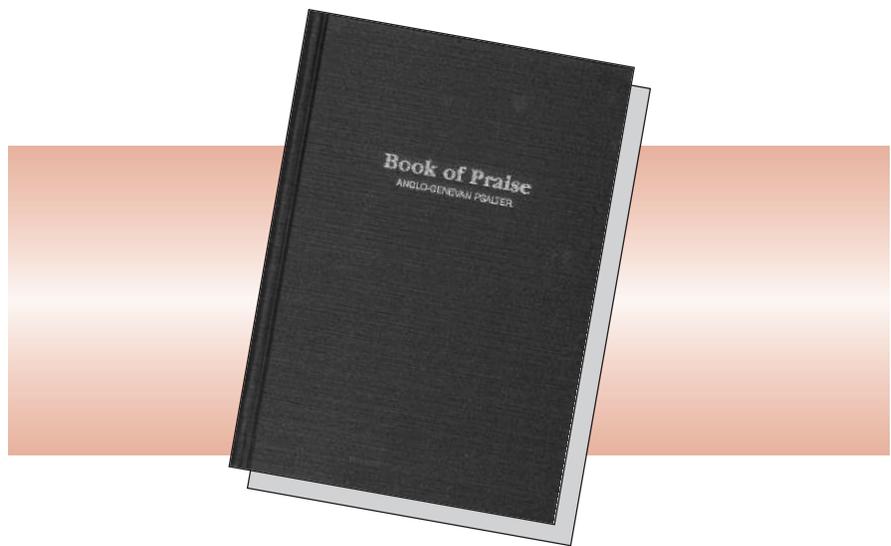
The nine tunes in the “*Light*” category took only minimal effort to master and in no time the congregation was singing them with confidence. At bottom, then, my unofficial survey suggests that of the 150 psalms in the *Book of Praise*, only sixteen tunes need concerted attention and practice before they can be sung well by the congregation.

Soon they become relics and fossils rather than active, useful tools for singing to God in worship.

A solution

What to do about these difficult tunes? Before concluding that they need replacing, it is only fair to try and re-learn them. After all, these tunes were originally collected and placed in the church’s song book precisely because they were suitable for congregational singing. Why would anyone include an inherently unsingable tune for worship in church? Is it not much more likely that as congregations we have become rusty with lack of practice? The only way to tell is to try them out, to attempt learning them and reassess after that.

There may be a number of ways to go about this, but I’d like to share with you one that we as church in Aldergrove have had success with. It centers on the principle of exposure and practice. The more exposed the congregation is to the challenging tunes and the more they practice them, the more the congregation will be able to learn them and sing them with confidence. To that end the Council introduced the practice of singing the difficult tunes five minutes prior to each worship service. In doing this we adopted a custom familiar to many churches, only now we adapted it to concentrate our attention on those twenty-five challenging tunes, plus a few of the hymns that were sung incorrectly.



Each song is announced to the congregation via the bulletin one week ahead of time. This allows and encourages members to actually practice the song at home in the week prior to singing it as church. Those members that have some musical talent have a golden opportunity to help their families learn them at home. In addition, whenever possible, the practice song is incorporated into the liturgy itself. This combined strategy gives great exposure to those challenging tunes and also allows them to function more regularly in the liturgy. In addition to this weekly practice, we also took advantage of our local choral group’s talents and asked them to teach us some of the harder tunes at congregational meetings.

Why would anyone include an inherently unsingable tune for worship in church?

The efforts have shown a marked improvement. Psalms which people thought altogether unsingable (e.g., psalm 41,59,129) soon became familiar and even loved. After one year of implementing this approach, all of the *Light* and *Medium* challenging tunes had been largely mastered, as well as a few of the *Hard* ones. I certainly have no hesitation in selecting these psalms in the liturgy for fear the congregation can’t sing them. We have since adapted the pre-service singing to focus on the remaining challenging tunes only prior to the PM worship service, while we are

singing through the whole *Book of Praise* before the AM service. At the moment I consider only four tunes as yet a struggle for the congregation.

Role of the minister

This exercise has demonstrated to me that our psalms in the *Book of Praise* are indeed singable and even pleasantly so for the most part. Admittedly, some tunes we will like more than others, but then which church song book will not have this? And as far as that is concerned, which church song book that is composed of over 210 songs as ours is does not have at least twenty-five songs that are presently unfamiliar and thus challenging for the congregation? It is difficult with a song book composed of 210 songs, even when keeping careful track of selections, to choose every song, let alone every stanza, once per year! It is not hard in such a setting for a single song to go several years without ever being sung in the worship service. Because a congregation cannot sing a song well, that doesn’t necessarily mean the song is unsingable. It more likely means the congregation has over time with under-usage become unfamiliar with the tune and thus lost its ability to sing it well.

Selecting songs for the liturgy is not an easy task.

Here, then, is where the minister must play a key role, for it is the minister, after all, who selects the songs for the liturgy in our churches. The minister must become more aware of the songs

he picks as well as the songs which he tends not to pick. It is easy to get into the pattern of selecting psalms and hymns which we are readily familiar with, which are nice to sing, which are enjoyed by the congregation. And that is all well and good except that in practice almost half of the psalms are never chosen. When half the psalms are not sung, then half of God's Word to us in these inspired songs will not be upon our lips or enter into our ears in public worship. And that is not only a shame, but it is a great loss for then much of the instruction which should be ours in song, much of that edification for the congregation and praise to God (Eph 5:19-20) ordained by God Himself will not take place.

Singing all the songs

Selecting songs for the liturgy is not an easy task. It needs to be carefully thought out and each song must find its rightful place in the order of the liturgy. To choose well and to choose from all parts of the Psalter takes a comprehensive knowledge of the psalms, not to mention the hymns. I have found an electronic version of the psalms and hymns to be extremely useful for this task. By way of key word searches on the computer, I can easily and quickly consider all relevant songs and stanzas in the *Book of Praise*, not merely the ones I happen to know from the top of my head or happen to come across in my studies. Combining this with a careful tracking of the songs chosen on a weekly basis will ensure a more rounded and thorough selection throughout the Psalter.

I would encourage churches and ministers to give serious consideration to learning those challenging tunes in

the *Book of Praise* and singing all the psalms and hymns. Indeed, there must be willingness from all involved in worship to take steps in this direction, to reclaim regular usage of the entire Psalter. It need not be a spiralling cycle of disuse, unfamiliarity, frustration and more disuse. Instead, by giving these tunes serious attention, the end result will be a broader range of psalms to sing more regularly.

As the tunes will no longer distract, the singing will become more edifying. Knowing the tune is imperative to singing from the heart, whether it's a psalm of joyful praise (e.g., Psalm 44) or a lament of deepest sorrow (e.g., Psalm 88). By utilizing all 150 psalms we will only gain a greater appreciation for the many facets of God's Word, and praise Him with all the songs He has given. Surely that will be a blessing for the church and ultimately more glorifying to the LORD.

¹J. Smith, "Difficult Tunes?", *Clarion*, Year-End issue, Vol. 50, no. 25, 2001, p.619.

²P. Janson, "Singing in the Canadian/American Reformed Churches (1)", *Reformed Music Journal*, Vol. X, no.2, 1998, p.54.

³*Ibid*, p.48.

⁴As I have occasion to preach in various congregations in various places, I would submit that my sample survey is not far off the mark for many congregations in our federation.

⁵See the "Letters to the Editor" *Clarion*, Vol. 51, no.4, p.91.



Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church in Aldergrove, British Columbia.

News Report from Committee on Bible Translation

Many have been wondering whether the publication of the New International Version (NIV) will be phased out of the market should the Today's NIV become popular. The Committee for Bible Translation has corresponded on this point with Dr. J. Stek, chairman of the NIV Committee on Bible Translation. He assured us that both US publishers (Zondervan and the International Bible Society) do not plan to phase out the NIV as long as there is any public demand for it.

*On behalf of the Committee,
Rev.J.Ludwig (secretary)*



Examined by Classis Ontario West on June 12, 2002 and declared eligible for call:

Student Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Examined by Classis Central Ontario on June 14, 2002 and declared eligible for call:

Student Walter Geurts

• • •

Examined by Classis Ontario West on June 12, 2002 and received consent to speak an edifying word in the churches (C.O. Art. 21):

Student Edwer Dethan

• • •

Called by the church at Armadale, WA, for mission work in the Lae region of Papua, New Guinea:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Called by the church at Toronto, ON, for mission work in the Port Moresby area of Papua, New Guinea:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Called by the church at Smithers, BC:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Called by the church at Grassie, ON:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Called by the church at London, ON:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

• • •

Declined the call to Vernon, BC:

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Abbotsford, BC.

• • •

Called by the church at Albany, Western Australia:

Candidate Julius Van Spronsen

Faith: New Generation is Looking Back¹

By Uwe Siemon-Netto

WASHINGTON, April 18 (UPI) – A new generation of worshippers is confounding pastors and church musicians alike.

No sooner had they got used to sometimes nerve-wrecking new forms of worship smacking of trivial entertainment, than a youthful thirst for tradition seems to be the liturgical aroma of the day. Meet the Millennials who are succeeding the Baby Boomers and the GenExers. The Millennials are young people born between 1981 and 2000.

“They are called that way because they will presumably live most of their lives in the new millennium,” explained Robert Olsavicky, an organist and graduate student at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Olsavicky has become a specialist of

the roller-coaster changes in worship preferences, changes that parallel developments in society at large. According to Olsavicky, today’s young Christians often desire the exact opposite of what the Rev. Rick Warren, a Californian church growth promoter, preaches. Warren shouts at fellow pastors, “Why are you still using that pipe organ people hate?”

“What is happening in the religion of teenagers is nothing short of astounding,” wrote Robert Webber in the current issue of *Reformed Worship*, a theological journal. “They want to return to a more stable time, a period of tradition. Not the tradition of the fifties, but of a much earlier time, the tradition of the old, very old times.” Webber is director of the In-

stitute of Worship Studies at Northern Baptist Seminary in Lombard, Ill. He sees in the “tradition emerging among the Millennials, Generation X and some Boomers a tradition of classical Christianity filtered through the grid of postmodern, post-Christian, neo-pagan society.”

Olsavicky, who is also the musical director of First United Methodist Church in Butler, Pa., concurred: “They are looking back to the Reformation era.” In his article, Webber quoted a youth director: “What appeals to this new generation is the cathedral and the stained-glass window. Take the pews out, let them sit on the floor, burn incense, have Scripture readings, lots of music, chants even,



and have communion, and they say 'Wow, this is me.'" Webber reminded his readers that sociologist Francis Fukuyama called the period between 1960 and 1990 "the great disruption," a shift from modernity to postmodernity. Webber added, "The Millennials appear to be the first generation of people coming out on the other side of the crisis."

This is not to say that the post-sixties onslaught against tradition is over. "There is church growth promoter Jeffrey Patton who tells congregations, 'If you do not introduce contemporary service your church will be vacant, with an organ for sale,'" said Olsavicky. "And Rick Warren laughs at references to kings, crowns and diadems in our old hymns. Yet the Promise Keepers sing them. Rick laughs at their antiquated lyrics. But just try to replace 'How great thou art' with 'How great you are,' and you destroy the poetry."

Of course, the Millennials sing, "How great thou art." And they would not dream of attending communion services administering potato chips and soda pop, as happened in some "progressive" churches in recent American history. They receive hosts and wine instead. Conflicting field reports emerge from America's worship war, however. In the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, for example, the church growth movement is still throwing overboard this orthodox denomination's liturgical tradition.

At the same time, this correspondent has encountered in the Washington area young and energetic LCMS members passionately promot-

ing a return to old, high forms of liturgy and the Lutheran confessions. True, the LCMS church growth faction is busy planting new congregations, but so is the young liturgical and confessional wing. Wherever you look, you find divergent trends literally side by side, in the Church as in society at large. In fact, worship trends often mirror society.

The shortage of organists is a case in point. "Sometimes we wonder if there will be enough organists to fill the demand," said Prof. John Ferguson of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. But this seems to be chiefly a problem of secular schools training concert organists, for whom there are not too many jobs. At the same time, though, Ferguson's organ class of twenty undergraduate students is full.

Ann Labounsky, who chairs the church music department at Duquesne University, reports the same about her school. But then both schools are church-related; St. Olaf is Lutheran, Duquesne, Catholic. They prepare students for music ministry in congregational life – in other words, for paying jobs, something secular schools cannot do.

And these are increasingly well-paying jobs, according to Ferguson. "One of our problems in the past was that churches used to treat organists very badly. They underpaid them. In the hinterland most organists were women, who got married and had children. The assumption was that they didn't need much money. "But then women entered the workforce. They stopped becoming organists because better-paid jobs became available."

As society changed, so did this profession. "Churches were finding it more and more difficult to hire good organists, so the salaries went up. Two churches in Minneapolis pay their organists more than \$100,000 per year. Said Ferguson: "One of my former students, who only has a bachelor's degree, was offered \$38,000 plus a house in Indiana. An entry-level instructor with a Ph.D. at St. Olaf does not earn that much." And now guess who attends Ferguson's classes? "Two third of my students are men. It used to be exactly the other way around," he told United Press International Wednesday.

It is one of the most impressive aspects of worship in America that, with the anti-historical follies of the post-sixties era still present, it seems to be straightening itself out. To be sure, organs still get ripped out, but there is an Organ Clearing House in Lexington, Mass., that rescues, stores and offers these instruments to other churches.

Many churches consider replacing their old pipe organs with electronic ones. But there is Richard G. Pelland of Derry, N.H., shouting at them via the Internet: "Don't do it! Don't replace the King of the instruments with an appliance! I'll repair it for you. It will probably cost you less than a new electronic machine, which won't last you longer than twenty years. A pipe organ can live for centuries."

True, like other movements in the society, developments in church are never clear-cut. Even in Robert Olsavicky's First United Methodist Church in Butler there are some services with contemporary bands, and the pastor is using skits, drama, video clips, charts and pointers to make a homiletic point.

Professor Paul Westermeyer, who teaches organ and church music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., takes a sanguine view as he ponders the circuitous ways of worship in America: "Over the long haul, the human race has enough sense to right itself," he said. Perhaps the tradition-loving Millennials will ultimately prove him right.

¹ This article is taken from the Internet



Dr. Uwe Siemon-Netto is a religion correspondent for UPI.



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Foreign Student Bursary Fund

News from The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

During the course of any given academic year, the College receives requests from individuals in third-world countries who seek a Reformed theological education. Not all applicants are academically qualified, but some are. Quite often they do not possess the necessary financial resources to be able to study here and enquire about the possibility for assistance.

A recent example is an Indonesian living in Singapore who is a member of the Indonesia Evangelical Reformed Church. While he didn't qualify for admission to the College, he pleaded with us as follows (with English corrected):

I just pray and wonder that one day the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches will be willing to send alumni or a professor as a missionary to come to our country to equip us who cannot afford to come to Canada. Like the people in Macedonia we are in Indonesia.

The correspondence exchanged by the Registrar with him and with others like him caused the Senate to ask the question whether we should not think more seriously and systematically about helping such students and so serving the cause of Reformed theology.

Eventually a funding proposal found its way through committees and onto the agenda of the meeting of the Board of Governors on September 6, 2001, where the proposal was approved in principle. The Senate was asked to prepare the criteria that will determine the eligibility of applicants for a bursary from the Fund.

At the meeting of January 25, 2002 these criteria were approved and the Board declared the Foreign Student Bursary Fund to be formally established on the condition that funding of the program was to have no impact on the annual regular operating budget. One clause of the approved guidelines may be of special interest. It reads:

Bursaries are given in the form of a loan which is forgivable. Once the student has completed the elected program and returned to his country of origin, the loan is forgiven at the rate of one year of support per one year of ministry/service in the country of origin.

By the inclusion of this clause the College hopes to ensure that those who may be considered in the greatest need (the student's fellow citizens back home) will receive the direct benefit from his exposure to our curriculum by means of this Fund.

The Finance and Property Committee was charged with the responsibility of giving wider publicity to this new venture, which offers – as one faculty member observed – the exciting opportunity of “exporting our Reformed theology.”

The College will run advertisements from time to time reminding Canadian Reformed brothers and sisters of the existence of this Fund and encouraging donations, initially to get the program off the ground. Gifts of

any size are welcome and will qualify for a receipt from the College for income tax purposes.

Assistance to be provided to a qualified student could range, depending on the applicant's circumstances, from partial funding to full support which might be as much as \$15,000 (or just about \$1.00 for each member of our Canadian Reformed Churches) per annum, for each year of the elected program of studies.

Please pray that this venture through our College will be instrumental in the spreading of the gospel in faraway lands.

Your gift may be sent to the College at the following address, with the cheque clearly identified as intended for the

“Foreign Student Bursary Fund”

The Theological College of
The Canadian Reformed Churches
110 West 27th Street
Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1

For the Finance and
Property Committee,
W. Smouter



The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

INVITES DONATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE NEWLY INAUGURATED

FOREIGN STUDENT BURSARY FUND

This is an opportunity to participate in the spreading of the gospel in faraway lands through your support of needy foreign students who desire, and are academically qualified, to study at our College.

Gifts of any size are welcome and those of \$10.00 and up qualify for a receipt for income tax purposes.

Please remit to the College at the following address, with the cheque clearly identified as intended for the

“FOREIGN STUDENT BURSARY FUND”

The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1



Should Schools Cooperate?

By Otto Bouwman

There are days when I am jealous. I'm envious of the organization that our churches have developed over the years. Could there be a similar level of infrastructure developed among our schools?

Church linkages

There are many ways in which the Canadian Reformed Churches demonstrate quite an impressive infrastructure; there are many connections and linkages between these churches. A few examples might be helpful: Most obviously, there is the tradition of regular meetings of classis, regional synods, and general synods. At these assemblies, the brothers work together, sometimes on problems "unique" to one church, (for example, a specific discipline case); other times they work on matters affecting the churches together (for example, contact with other churches or work at the Theological College). Additionally, there is the annual church visitation and its subsequent report to classis. When one church needs additional assistance, neighbouring ministers or consistories are called in to provide it, whether it is for advice, for judgement, or for preaching. There are cooperative efforts that take place between churches on the mission fields. There is a bit of a "nerve centre" and teaching centre for the whole federation: the Theological College. The latter is able to operate without a preoccupation on financial affairs, as the money collected for the college is raised primarily through the local church budgets.

Of course, in addition to all the institutionalized ways – most of which are prescribed in the church order – of helping each other, many informal linkages exist as well. Office bearers conferences are part of this informal heritage, and ministers and office bearers have many helpful informal contacts that help them fulfill their tasks.

The infrastructure that has developed in our churches, both formally and informally, has a long and respectable history. We do well to maintain this rich heritage. It provides ways of helping communities and causes where help needs to be given and it allows the system to operate as a system.

School linkages

One searches in vain for a corollary in our schools. Though I'm not suggesting that we need to find an equivalent level of infrastructure development either in our schools, one wonders if the status quo is really ideal. Are current structures and practices really the most desirable? What systems are in place to ensure that schools have mechanisms in place to be a hand and a foot to each other? In most places across the country, each year Canadian Reformed teachers get together with others who are more or less close by for a few days of in-servicing. In places where schools

The infrastructure . . . provides ways of helping communities and causes where help needs to be given and it allows the system to operate as a system.

are relatively close together there are projects which some schools tackle: a musical production here or a specific curriculum quandary there. Bi- or tri-annually, the principals of the schools meet for a convention for a few days. Regionally, on the other hand, there seems to be growing cooperation. Principals in Ontario and in British Columbia meet regularly in their respective jurisdictions.

Cooperation at the board level is even more limited. In Ontario there is a League where matters of common concern are discussed, but relatively little appears to have been accomplished thus far. I hasten to add, quoting Mr. Leo Kampen, a previous chairman of the League, "there have been serious efforts, but not serious execution." In

Manitoba and Alberta boards operate almost in isolation from each other. In British Columbia, the principals provide coordination for cooperative curriculum efforts and the school boards work somewhat closely together because of combined efforts in maintaining a regional high school.

Our school system also has a Teachers' College, which could, theoretically, operate as both a nerve centre and a teaching and resource centre for our school system. However, many school societies do not demonstrate much support for the college – for a number of reasons. Be that as it may, the consequent financial and human resource limitations it faces mean that it cannot become the college it could theoretically be.

Why not?

Of course, it's relatively easy to understand how we came to the current situation. Increased interaction and interdependence might cost money – at least, in the short term. And there are limited supplies of money in our system. An additional reality is the physical distance that separates the local schools. A third reason for the difficulties is the differing expectations and demands of the different provincial governments across the country. Fourthly, some might argue that schools are locally controlled, and therefore should operate in isolation from each other.

Why should we?

However, do our communities dare to consider possible changes? After all, it is true that the problems faced by most schools are also faced by other school communities. There are the challenges of teaching children of parents who do not have the same sense of vision about Reformed education as previous generations appear to have had. All the schools operate with limited amounts of money. All the schools face questions of how best to integrate new technology in the schools. Is there a school which feels no pressure because of the current staffing shortage? People such as Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff in Ontario and Mr. A. Nap in British Columbia have made it clear that the postmodern realities of this century

demand a response by our schools. Every education committee across the country sighs about the continued need for revamping the school's curriculum. Most school communities have to grapple with meeting the needs of special needs children, from one end of the spectrum to the other. Especially small school communities grapple with the need to provide quality high school education with very few options. And lastly, how will the schools respond to the challenging situation of increased contact with and respect for our local United Reformed brothers and sisters?

How do we address these challenges? At present, it seems that either each community struggles to find its own answers, and is often not really happy with either the process it follows or the final product it produces. Alternatively, solutions to these problems are simply not sought, because the problem is so great that the individual school cannot deal with it. Finally, in those communities where challenges facing the schools are being properly addressed, I suspect that a lot of duplication of resources is taking place; after

all, the community down the road is going through the identical steps.

How could we?

I believe that there is substantial room for increasing the level of interdependence between our schools, both at the teacher, the principal, the education committee, and at the board levels. In Western Canada (west of the Ontario border) the provincial governments have committed themselves to increased cooperation in curriculum development.

I believe that there is substantial room for increasing the level of interdependence between our schools.

That should mean that we can have more and more cooperation in Western Canada in working with these new government directives. We're seeing, thanks to the Reformed Curriculum Fund in British Columbia, some steps towards

increased working together there. For example, this past summer teachers from several provinces worked collaboratively on a music curriculum for the elementary grades.

But even aside from provincial government expectations, there are many areas where increased cooperation is possible. There are a wide range of areas that could be coordinated by a central nerve centre for our schools. One looks at all the topics covered by organizations such as Christian Schools International, and realizes that we have some substantial work to do. Board development, education committee training, principal development, educational research, and curriculum writing could all be addressed. Additional teacher in-servicing across the country from a uniquely Canadian Reformed perspective would be a positive step. The current cautious steps being taken in Ontario towards hiring a full-time curriculum coordinator there are to be applauded. Similarly, the work done by the Curriculum Activities for Reformed Education (CARE) committee over the years in Ontario is also to be



Photo by Cor Lodder

commended. Additionally, proposed action plans for responses to new issues of the day, ranging from technology to developing interchurch relations, would be helpful to many boards and other educational leaders. Perhaps the possibilities of using the Internet and/or videos could be explored as a way of meeting the needs of some of the older students in our system. To that end, regular provincial/regional meetings of board chairmen and principals could be an excellent vehicle by which to address such issues of common concern.

A revamped and revitalized Teachers' College could be an important first step towards increased interaction between our schools and school societies.

A revamped and revitalized Teachers' College could be an important vehicle towards increased interaction between our schools and school societies. It could serve as an effective resource centre for our schools, an institution whose spokes reach out into all the communities it serves. Part of the way in which the Teachers' College could fulfill this mandate would be a new level of continued professional development of teachers throughout the whole country. If our system cannot train a substantial number of incoming as well as practicing teachers, the link between what is done in the church and in the classroom will, over time, be eroded. That must not be allowed to happen.

Perhaps a new level of performance at the League level in Ontario – and, if I understand correctly, new initiatives might already be well underway – would be helpful for all Canadian Reformed students there. Would it not be helpful to many incoming board and education committee members, if regular training sessions were made available by experienced people who are thoroughly familiar with our system? It would be in the best interests of the Canadian Reformed system in each province if the schools could transcend purely local issues and present a combined front to provincial officials and work together on areas of common concern.

Summary

I understand fully, and strongly advocate, that the schools are operated and controlled by the local parents.

However, interaction with other schools in the system need not be seen as a polar opposite of local parental control. After all, the neighbouring Canadian Reformed school is also being operated by Canadian Reformed parents, who in all likelihood have similar hopes and expectations for their school.

Therefore, reasons to increase the level of interaction between our schools include at least the following:

- the existence of challenges common to all our schools
- pooling of resources is the most financially effective response to dealing with these challenges
- some challenges require a system-wide response – for example, teacher and principal inservicing
- increased sense of operating in a system of schools

The less we work together as a system, the further our schools are likely to drift apart. Some teachers and boards might well seek increased instruction and direction from places such as Christian Schools International. Others will seek it from the local public universities or education departments. Still others will invent their own eclectic response to local challenges. Though these respective sources might be very valuable in their own right, we cannot rely exclusively on them. If we do, ultimately, our schools will not be recognizable as a school system. The more direction we take from our public and/or interdenominational counterparts, the more we will resemble them.

Interaction with other schools in the system need not be seen as a polar opposite of local parental control.

We have such a gloriously rich heritage. If we hang onto it together, together responding to the challenges that face us, and together better articulating the common heritage we have in the context of today, then our children will be well served to face the challenge of living in the world of tomorrow.

Mr. Otto Bouwman is principal of the Tyndale Christian School in Calgary, Alberta.

Peregrine Survey, May 2002

By K. Sikkema

The Alberta teachers' strike passed by, but did not go unnoticed by our schools. Coaldale's chairman muses, "We are thankful that our school's arrangement with our teachers does not include this possibility. We salute our teachers for their devotion. They take a position at a Reformed school at lower pay than their counterparts in the public or separate system. Then they are required to be members of the society and donate as well. In a deficit year, they agree to a wage freeze, and accept a minimal increase directly related to a funding increase. All this is done because they see the need for Christian education." In the same vein, Rev. R. Aasman delivered a presentation on the "Why" of Christian education in Edmonton.

With the Canadian Reformed - United Reformed federative relationship now in Phase II, we begin to see evidence of how this is worked out at local levels, also in the schools.

URC students

With the Canadian Reformed - United Reformed federative relationship now in Phase II, we begin to see evidence of how this is worked out at local levels, also in the schools. Parkland Immanuel Christian School's promotion committee (Edmonton) is actively pursuing membership from the URC. Dufferin Christian School (Carmen) and ACRES (Attercliffe) were advertising for replacement and additional (Canadian Reformed) staff in *Christian Renewal*. Covenant Christian School in Flamborough includes the developing relationship with the URC as one of the variables to be considered for its expansion or possible move. Among other schools that are considering this matter we found Ebenezer in Smithers, Guido de Brès in Hamilton, John Calvin in Smithville, and Coaldale Christian School. It is not clear how this will develop if the relationship between the two federations were to falter or stall, and it is clearly

an issue that boards and the communities they represent will have to consider with due care.

Pursue new membership

The Fraser Valley schools spent February 1 poring over RCDF Visual Arts, Physical Education, and Music curriculum materials. "This kind of exposure and interaction helps teachers be more in tune with the materials presented to them and so renders the implementation of these curricular documents more effective and meaningful." Credo Christian Elementary "decided to more actively pursue new membership within the church community. If we believe that the education of our covenant children is a community responsibility then we all should support the school either as a member or as a donor." This is echoed all the way in Owen Sound, "We must remember that it is a community of believers that contributes to [the school] on a daily basis. If we go back, it was the members of the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church, as it was established in Chatsworth, that through prayerful consideration decided to form a school society to educate the children entrusted in our care. It was not a couple of individual members who thought it was a good idea and then all of a sudden a school started. . . ."

As the principal-designate for the William of Orange School had to resign due to health concerns, we wish Mr. DeGlint full recovery and patience in this trying time, and Mr. Siebenga the blessings of the Lord as he takes on this task. Welcome back in the teaching profession! May the Lord also provide for the much needed educational leadership in several other schools across the country.

The band

It seems that the Prairies have been busy with special presentations. The Credo Christian High School Band from Langley, British Columbia performed a series of concerts in Alberta, and were at one point "joined by six other bands from Alberta and Manitoba for a mass performance in Edmonton on March 23." From various sources we understand that the "Peace Like a River Band Tour 2002" was a grand success. For a report and over 400 pictures, visit www.credochs.org. Prairie teachers were also "off to Coaldale for their Annual CRTA Teacher's Convention on Thursday and Friday, April 25

and 26, 2002." We look forward to hearing more about that convention, at which Mr. Ben Harsevoort of Heritage Christian School provided the keynote address on, "We have the mind of Christ."

Covenant Christian School in Flamborough sent letters to the mayor of New York City and President Bush after the attacks of 9-11. In response, they received a thank you note from Mr. Giuliani: "Thank you for writing to us concerning September 11, 2001. On behalf of the people of New York City, I thank you for your prayers and support." In the student section, we read, "Miss W. also went to Cairo the capital city of Egypt. Cairo is very populated, with nearly 60,000,000 people. The whole population of Egypt is approximately 46,000,000,000." (Oops. . . these figures should perhaps be 9.6 million and 66.0 million? k.s.)

*In different schools
around the country students
have been actively raising
funds for the poor and
missions.*

Ontario tax credits

In addition to preparing for the implications of the equity in education tax credit, all Ontario school boards have formed a formal association with CCRTC. The boards have worked hard to prepare the documents necessary to have their school qualify for the Equity in Education Tax Credit, and are considering ways to make the most effective use of this credit. In the association with the CCRTC, the boards pay \$2.00 per society member per year for membership in the CCRTC. It should be noted, however, that this amount does "not go very far towards paying the costs of a post-secondary educational institution" and CCRTC "continues to count on the individual members within our school societies and churches to help support the goal of well-educated teachers in the Reformed tradition." The Fraser Valley schools are also actively looking into what CCRTC can do for them. The College has not been able to find a suitable third faculty member for the advertised position, but will be able to fill the needs with the expertise of different

part-time lecturers. Hopefully the position can be filled next year.

The Maranatha/Emmanuel board in Fergus believes that "it is time to include the families that are members of the Canadian Reformed School Society of Dufferin Area, and have children in our school as well, to be given the right to vote. A very good relationship has been established with the Orangeville High School Association over the years. There are more students attending from Orangeville each year. It will also give them a sense of ownership and hopefully encourage more involvement from Orangeville and Grand Valley." The membership also voted strongly in favour of doing another study on adding Kindergarten, and grades 11 and 12, with a further discussion to be held in the fall of this year. When asked when to add kindergarten and grade 11, 70% of valid ballots indicated to prefer 2004 over 2005 or 2006.

Raising money for causes

In different schools around the country students have been actively raising funds for the poor and missions. Credo Christian High raised money for the Middle East Reformed Fellowship and Voice of the Martyrs, by auctioning Lunch Boxes: "some young men were willing to spend more than \$50 to have the opportunity to share a lunch with a young lady." They raised \$3732.50 in addition to over \$5000 in profits from the Band Tour! With a similar purpose, but in a radically different way, the PICS (Edmonton) Students' Council planned a Famine Project for Friday, May 3 "to help those in need of food across the world." Guido de Brès High in Hamilton also raised funds for the CRWRF by having a "30 hour famine."

It has been a busy and exciting year, with both joys and challenges, and students are looking forward to the summer holidays. So are their teachers. May it be a time of refreshment and provide opportunity for pondering God's mighty works from various different angles, and also renew our commitment to community-based education of God's covenant children. With his mercy, we can then continue for another year.



Mr. Keith Sikkema is a grade 8 teacher and vice-principal at John Calvin School in Smithville, Ontario.



Press Release of the first Classis Ontario West, March 27, 2002, held at Ancaster, Ontario

Opening

On behalf of the convening church at Ancaster, the Rev. G. Ph. van Popta calls the meeting to order. He requests all present to sing Hymn 4: 1, 4, reads 1 Peter 1: 13-25, and leads in prayer. He welcomes all the delegates to this first Classis Ontario West. He congratulates the Slaa family with the birth a healthy son. He notes that the Church at Grand Rapids has extended a call to the Rev. J. E. Ludwig of London, Ontario.

Credentials

The Church at Ancaster examines the credentials. Primary delegates lawfully represent all the churches. Classis is constituted. The executive is as follows:

Chairman: Rev. J. Ludwig
Vice-chairman: Rev. Cl. Stam
Clerk: Rev. J. Slaa

Agenda

The chairman thanks the convening church for its preparatory work. A special welcome is extended to br. D. de Boer who is at classis for an examination. His wife is also welcomed. The agenda is adopted with the addition of some church visitation reports. Also, the regulations for Church Visitation will be finalized. Certain new appointments will have to be made; and the classical regulations will need to be adapted to suit the present situation. The examination of br. de Boer will take place first. The Rev. H. Versteeg will give a report on his visit to the OPC Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario. The agenda is then adopted.

Examination br. D. de Boer for permission to speak an edifying word

The documents are received and reviewed which are needed for classical examination. These documents are found to be in good order and the examination may proceed. The sermon proposal is on Leviticus 10:1-7. The sermon is discussed in closed session, and is considered sufficient. The examination continues. Rev. Cl. Stam examines in doctrine and creeds. In closed ses-

sion the examination is evaluated and br. de Boer is given the right to speak an edifying word upon completion of his third year at the Theological College. Classis informs br. de Boer of this decision. After singing Psalm 81:1, and after thanksgiving by Rev. H. Versteeg, the members of Classis and guests are given the opportunity to congratulate br. de Boer and his wife.

Question Period ad Art 44 C.O.

Question period ad Art 44 C.O. is held. All churches report that they abide by the adopted church order. No help or advice is need by any of the churches. Classis gratefully takes note of this.

Approbation call to Rev. D. vandeBurgt

The Church at Glanbrook requests that the call to Rev. D. vandeBurgt, formerly of Denver, Colorado, be approved. All the required documents are present. The call is approbated. It is noted that the date of the installation of Rev. vandeBurgt is set for April 14, 2002. The Church at Hamilton is requested to represent Classis at this occasion.

Inviting of fraternal delegates to future Classes

Via mail a suggestion was received regarding the inviting and sending of delegates to and from the classes of churches, which we have recognized. This matter was referred back to the churches for a proposal. Meanwhile the existing practice of the convening church inviting delegates can be maintained. The Church at Ancaster is asked to present a proposal to the next Classis Ontario West.

Proposals

There are no proposals from the churches.

Correspondence

A letter is received from a sub-committee of the CCCA (Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad) re inviting a delegate from the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS). The Church at Ancaster will formulate a proposal in this respect.

Reports

There are two church visitation reports. The reports are heard of the visi-

tation to the churches at Chatham and Hamilton. These reports are received with gratitude. Rev. H. Versteeg reports on a visit to the OPC Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario. He addressed this Presbytery and conveyed the greetings of our churches to them. This report is gratefully noted.

Appointments

The following appointments are made:

Convening Church next Classis: Chatham

Officers: Rev. J. Slaa, chairman, Rev. H. Versteeg, Vice-chairman; Rev. J. E. Ludwig, clerk.

Date and place of next Classis: June 12, at Chatham, Ontario.

Examinations: the Deputies *ad examina* will call the ministers and arrange for assignments.

Classical Treasurer: the Church at Hamilton will find a suitable treasurer.

Auditing the books of the treasurer: Church at Glanbrook.

Church Visitors: Rev. Cl. Stan, Rev. G. Ph. Van Popta. Rev. H. Versteeg is designated as alternate. At this point also the guidelines for church visitation are officially adopted.

Archives-keeping: Church at London.
Inspection of archives: church at Kerwood.

Needy Students Fund (Art 19 C.O.): Church at Chatham.

Needy Churches Fund: the Church at Ancaster.

Revised Adaptation of Classical Regulations: Church at Kerwood.

New Form of Subscription book: Church at London

Fraternal delegate to next URC Classis: Church at Hamilton.

Closing

Personal Question period: is held. Censure ad Article 34: does not need to be exercised. The Acts are read and adopted. Press Release is approved. The chairman requests the members of Classis to sing Psalm 127:1, and leads in thanksgiving. Classis is then closed.

Cl. Stam
Vice-chairman *eo tempore*

Press Release for Regional Synod West, May 21, 2001

Opening

On behalf of the convening church, Winnipeg Redeemer, Pastor T. VanRaalte welcomed the delegates and guests, and opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer. Some recent events among the churches in Western Canada and USA were noted. After the credentials were found to be in order, synod was declared to be constituted. The following brothers were elected officers of the assembly:

chairman, Rev. E. Kampen;
vice-chairman, Rev. J. Moesker;
clerk, Rev. B. Wielenga.

The officers took their places, and the agenda was adopted.

Correspondence

A letter from General Synod Neerlandia 2001 about its decisions concerning 4 overtures submitted by recent Regional Synods West was read. The decisions of General Synod 2001 – Acts Arts. 72, 78, 86 and 75 were taken note of. Two appeals were declared admissible. An appeal of a br. and sr. concerning a decision of Classis Pacific East Mar. 30, 31 2000 about a “possible interpretation” of Luke 22:17 as supporting individual cups at the Lord’s Supper was discussed. Synod decided that the possible interpretation of Luke 22:17 is not in conflict with the rest of Scripture, nor with historical testimony, nor the Church Order. The use of individual cups is not in conflict with Scripture, nor the Church Order, nor the Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper. An appeal of the Canadian Reformed Church of Calgary about a de-

cision of Classis Pacific West October 2, 2001 was dealt with. The original appeal concerned allowing Rev. Boersema to retain his status as minister emeritus of Maranatha Church while becoming member of the OPC in the USA in 2000. Synod decided that classis was not clear in its response to Calgary’s appeal.

OPC

Rev. A. Allison of Fort Collins, Colorado Orthodox Presbyterian Church was present on behalf of the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. He was welcomed and invited to be seated at Synod and participate in discussion. He spoke some words of fraternal greeting on behalf of the Presbytery and expressed gratitude for our relationship as churches. Rev. Kampen expressed thankfulness for Rev. Allison’s words and presence, mentioning that he was the first OPC representative to visit a Regional Synod West.

Reports

Two deputies Regional Synod Art.48 Church Order, Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. K. Jonker, reported on their attendance at a Classis Pacific East where they gave concurring advice to the dismissal of Rev. D. Moes from the Canadian Reformed Church of Vernon as per Article 11, Church Order. A treasurer’s report from br. H. Lubbers was tabled, as audited by br. D.N. Moedt (CGA) on behalf of Taber Canadian Reformed Church. This report was received with gratitude. There was no report from Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton on the state of the archives of Regional Synod West.

Appointments

Synod made the following appointments:

- a. Treasurer for Regional Synod: br. H. Lubbers
- b. Auditor for books of the treasurer: Taber Canadian Reformed Church
- c. Church for Care of the Archives: Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton
- d. Church for Inspection of the Archives: Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton
- e. Deputies ad Article 48 Church Order:
 - Classis Pacific West: Rev. C. Van Spronsen (alternates in order Revs. E. Kampen, J. Huijgen)
 - Classis Pacific East: Rev. R.A. Schouten (alt. in order, Revs. M.H. VanLuik, B. Wielenga)
 - Classis Alberta: Rev. R. Aasman (alt. in order Revs. E.J. Tiggelaar, W.B. Slomp)
 - Classis Manitoba: K. Jonker (alt. in order Revs. J. Moesker, A.J. Pol)

The following arrangements were made for next Regional Synod West:

Date: November 18, 2003

Convening church: Yarrow, BC

Closing

Personal question period was held. Rev. Kampen thanked the brothers for the good cooperation given during the meeting. The Acts were adopted and this press release approved. Rev. Kampen closed the assembly with petition for blessing on the decisions taken and with thanksgiving to the Lord.

On behalf of Regional Synod
Winnipeg 2002, Rev. J. Moesker 

The Covenant of Love

Exploring our Relationship with God

by Clarence Stam

The Covenant of Love discusses the importance and meaning of the covenant which the Lord has made with mankind. The main purpose of this book is to show from the Bible that this covenant is not a sterile contract between two parties, but a living relationship between God and his people. The only motive for this covenant is God’s love and the only source of this covenant is God’s grace. This love and grace have been amply shown in Jesus Christ, the great Mediator of the covenant.

It is the calling of all people to respond to this covenant of love manifest in Jesus Christ. From our side the covenant must be also a vibrant relationship in which we joyfully and faithfully serve the Lord for his blessings given us in our Saviour.

Soft cover, 208 pages Can. \$11.75 U.S. \$ 8.50

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By Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers

Summer has finally arrived. The school holidays begin soon and school will be over for another year. Isn't that exciting? Have you got lots of plans over the holidays? Visiting friends or family in other places, or going camping? There are so many things you can do over school holidays, especially when it is for such a long time. Have a lot of fun.

Make sure you remember me and write me a letter telling me what you did, won't you?

Lots of love,
Aunt Betty

Riddles

1. What do you call a man with a shovel on his head? Doug.
2. What do you call a man without a shovel on his head? Douglas.
3. What do you call a man with fifty seagulls sitting on his head? Cliff.
4. What do you call a man who has twenty rabbits up his nose? Warren.
5. What did the lady buy when she went window shopping? Windows.
6. What is the most important thing to put into cakes? Your teeth.
7. What happened when the basketball player drank milk? He dribbled.
8. What's the easiest way to find a pin in your carpet? Walk around in your bare feet.
9. What do you get if you cross the road without looking? Run over.
10. What did the teddy bear say when he was offered dessert? "No thanks, I'm stuffed!"

Puzzles

Who's there?

Which persons in the Bible are generally connected with the following places?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Nazareth | 6. Cyrene |
| 2. Ur of the Chaldees | 7. Bethany |
| 3. Arimathaea | 8. Ramah |
| 4. Gath | 9. Jericho |
| 5. Tarsus | 10. Nineveh |

Name the Woman

1. Opening his eyes from a deep sleep, he saw the woman who was to be his wife.
2. This woman was known as a virtuous woman in her city.
3. Twice God sent His angel to this woman to instruct her how to rear her child.
4. She made a request of Jesus at a wedding feast.
5. This woman was told that two nations were in her womb.
6. Solomon sought to kill this widow's son.
7. This Hebrew's wife lived for a time in the place of the king of Egypt.
8. King Saul visited this woman at night.
9. This woman spoke against Moses.
10. A king restored to this woman her house and land.



Titles

If we gave titles to biblical characters, the following could be supported by the facts in the Bible about them. Match titles and people.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The Fallen Angel | a. Thomas, John 20:27 |
| 2. The Mother of All Living | b. Enoch, Genesis 5:22 |
| 3. The Wise King | c. Jeremiah Lamentations 1:16 |
| 4. Father of Many Nations | d. Lucifer, Isaiah 14:12 |
| 5. Prophet of Love | e. Abram (Abraham) Genesis 17:4 |
| 6. The Doubter | f. John, John 13:23 |
| 7. The Beloved Disciple | g. Jesus, John 1:29 |
| 8. The Betrayer | h. Eve, Genesis 3:20 |
| 9. The Weeping Prophet | i. Judas Iscariot Matthew 10:4 |
| 10. The Lamb of God | j. Solomon, 1 Kings 4:29 |
| 11. Man Who Walked with God | k. Hosea, Hosea 3:1-5 |